A HISTORY OF CALEXICO

By Margaret Romer, M.A.

Chapter I.

The Valley before Settlement.

Tens of thousands of years ago, before man inhabited the earth, the Gulf of California extended inland almost to San Gorgonio Pass. Had Yuma been in existence then, it would have been on the eastern shore of the Gulf, while the mountains east of San Diego would have been on the western shore. The entire Imperial Valley was then under the waters of the Gulf of California.

The mighty Colorado River emptied into the Gulf on the eastern side. The Colorado is a powerful stream. Its drainage basin extends from the Gulf of California to the southern edge of Yellowstone National Park, an area of of over 260,000 square miles. Most of this region is mountainous and erosion is rapid. As a result, the Colorado carries in suspension tons and tons of solid matter. Even now this mighty stream carries some 160,000,000 tons of sediment past Yuma every year.

For centuries, this mass had been poured into the Gulf from the eastern side. It is little wonder then that it gradually built up a delta, which year by year crept westward until at last it reached the opposite shore.

Thus the Gulf acquired its present shore line, while the northern part was entirely cut off, leaving it an inland sea. The River chose the southeastern side of its delta and thus flowed into the Gulf. The inland sea evaporated at the rate of about six feet per year. In the course of time it dried completely, leaving an arid basin which later became known as the Salton Sink. Its deepest portions were covered with a thick crust of salt.

How many centuries it remained so, no one knows. However, evidences clearly show that the Colorado again changed its course and again flowed into the Sink. In due time it refilled the inland sea and made of it a great fresh water lake. When it was full, it broke over the silt dam on the south-western side by the Cocopah Mountains and found its way to the Gulf by what is now called "Hardy's Colorado." During the years, perhaps centuries, that the Valley was submerged under the lake, the Colorado was

dumping its millions of tons of sediment into it each year. This process continued until a depth of 1,000 feet of sediment had accumulated. This was God's way of making the Valley ready for the coming of man. This was the process which made the Valley potentially one of the richest spots in the world.

The Colorado again changed its course, due to the shifting of its own delta, and again flowed into the Gulf, leaving the lake to dry in the sun. How many times the mighty river returned to the lake no man knows, but judging from its later caprices, it was probably several times.

The Valley has been practically dry since the advent of man. In 1540, Melchoir Diaz, a Spanish explorer in the service of Cortez, viewed the great Valley. It was then, and has every since been, a vast arid region. It is almost rainless and the sun beats fiercely down the whole year through. Little wonder then that the inhabitants of this region were limited to horned toads and lesser animals, and vegetation to the sage-brush and an occasional mesquite tree. It was a land of sterile, parching plains and shifting sand hills. Here lay hundreds of square miles of the richest soil in the world, 1,000 feet deep, waiting silently, protected by the sun, waiting, waiting, through the centuries, until the need of man should spur the strongest on to bring the waters of the mighty Colorado again to the land and cause it to bear fruit to feed humanity.

The earliest record of the Valley having been crossed by white men, was in 1781. This was in connection with the founding of the pueblo, Los Angeles. Governor De Neve had put the work into the hands of Captain Rivera. Rivera had gathered his band of colonists at Loreto, Lower California, and had delegated the task of guiding them to the site of Los Angeles, to a lieutenant, while he led the supply train by way of Yuma. He lost his life on the great desert at the hands of the Indians.

The Valley was crossed several times by military parties in the war with Mexico in 1846. By the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the California-New Mexico territory passed into the possession of the United States for a consideration of $15,000,000. An army was sent to take possession of the territory.

In 1853, Professor William P. Blake made the first survey of the Valley. He and his party were in the employ of the Government. The small remaining remnant of the old lake appears on the charts as "Blake's Sea." It was

Professor Blake who first observed the old beach line and examined the shells, which observations revealed the geological story of the Valley.

Many of the "Forty-niners" came to California *via* a trail over the desert through the great Sink. They crossed the Colorado River at the ford at Yuma and then crossed the Valley. Later, Dr. A. L. Lincoln, a relative of Abraham Lincoln, established a ferry across the Colorado at Yuma. A few years after this, seventy-four camels were imported from the Saharah to do service over the desert portion of the old trail. They were soon replaced by horses, however, as camels moved too slowly for Americans.

The road branched at Sunset Springs, one part going through San Gorgonio Pass to Los Angeles, the other going southwest over the Carriso Creek route to San Diego. It was over this latter route that the stage line was operated after 1858. The famous old stage driver, David Butterfield, of whom many tales of bravery have been told, carried the United States mail and passengers across the desert twice a month. When the Civil War broke out the service was increased to once a week.

The Eastern terminal of the stage line was at Yuma. The Confederacy claimed Arizona in its ranks and confiscated Mr. Butterfield's property. Thus ended the old stage line.

There were three stage stations in the Valley. These were located, respectively, at Coyote Wells in the west, Indian Wells about the center, and at the southern limit of the east side chain of sand hills. These stations were situated where there were springs. They consisted of an adobe waiting room and stables where fresh horses were kept for the stages. Perhaps the best known of these stations today is Coyote Wells, where the El Centro-San Diego stage still stops to permit the passengers to quench their thirst at the well, only that a garage has replaced the old adobe stable. The old adobe waiting room has been replaced by a little frame store and post office.

About this time also, the Valley was definitely studied with a view to reclamation, but nothing came of the effort. Considerable scientific interest in the Valley was evidenced in the seventies.

Dr. Oliver Meredith Wozencraft, a San Francisco physician, came to the Valley in 1849. He was quiet, gentle, lovable, and a man with vision. He conceived the idea of reclaiming the Sink. His general plan was virtually the same as that which was followed later. He presented his

ideas to the State Legislature and was sympathetically heard. In 1859, that body passed a bill proposing to cede to Dr. Wozencraft all state rights to the land on this desert, in consideration of his reclaiming it.

Government sanction was needed before this project could be begun. The bill was presented to Congress, but the country was on the verge of the great Civil War and had no time for the uninhabited desert valley in the West. The Doctor waited patiently until the war was over and again went to Washington with his plans. He made trips to the Capital year after year, each time waiting, waiting, months at a time, in the hope that his bill would get a hearing; but always more pressing matters of state caused it to be set aside. He died there on his mission, in 1887. He gave his life's work for the Valley but never achieved success. His is a sad but beautiful story of perseverance and devotion. His daughter, Mrs. Mary A. Streibrenner, of San Bernardino, said; "It was his own idea and no one's else. . . .My dear father lost a fortune on it. . . . Everything went for the desert. Dear father was confident of success. He gave his very life to achieve its reclamation."[1] He has been called the "Father of the Imperial Valley."

The government made a partial re-survey in 1880. It was in this survey that New River was named. In 1886 the Southern Pacific Railroad crossed on its way from Los Angeles to Yuma.

It was also in the eighties that the New Liverpool Salt Company established an extensive plant at the northern end of what is now Salton Sea. The salt was scraped up and piled by means of a steam shovel. Only a minimum of refining was necessary as the salt was naturally white and pure. The plant operated profitably until 1906, when it was completely destroyed by the flood.

For several years in the nineties, the southwestern part of the Valley overflowed in the winter and early spring. This caused a luxuriant growth of grass. The cattle men of the eastern part of San Diego County were quick to take advantage of the feeding possibility and herded their cattle into the Valley by the thousands. When summertime came with its heat and dryness, the cattle were herded back to the mountains. Mr. Frank Thing and his brother first came to the Valley with their cattle in 1891. Mr. Thing spent several winters there and later, when settlement began, went to Calexico as one of the first permanent settlers.

1. Howe, "Story of the First Decade," 26.

During one of his early winters in the Valley, Mr. Thing by chance ran across a great pile of human skeletons. There were hundreds of them. Whether they were the remains of white men or of Indians, he did not know. His duties did not take him back to the spot for many years. When he did return, he searched carefully for the bones but was unable to find them again. He also told many of his friends and a searching party tried vainly to re-discover the skeletons. They had undoubtedly been covered by the drifting sands. Unless by some miracle, the story of those bodies will remain a secret which the Great Desert will never reveal.

Chapter II.

C. R. Rockwood and the Beginnings of Reclamation 1892 to 1900

The man to whom the credit for the actual reclamation of the Salton Sink is chiefly due was Charles Robinson Rockwood. Mr. Rockwood was a man of vision, perseverance, and indomitable courage. He was born in Michigan in 1860. He attended the University of that State, but did not graduate as he was forced to leave an unfinished course because of trouble with his eyes. Engineering was the profession of his choice, so he came West. He was in the service of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad for two years and then with the Southern Pacific for seven years. In 1889 he entered the United States Geological Survey. He was chief engineer in the Yakima Valley Reclamation project in Oregon, which was never completed because of the withdrawal of financial support.

John C. Beatty was a promoter of some prominence. He had learned of Mr. Rockwood's success and sent for him to investigate the possibility of irrigating a vast tract of land in Sonora, Mexico, from the Colorado River. Mr. Rockwood reported to Mr. Beatty that his project was impracticable.

While in Yuma, Mr. Rockwood heard of the Salton Sink, and immediately investigated. He quickly saw the possibilities and made his reports to Mr. Beatty. The latter gave up the Sonora project and started the "Colorado River Irrigation Company" and began selling stock.

Mr. Rockwood began his survey of the Sink in the winter of 1892. He was assisted by his associate engineer, Mr. C. N. Perry. In the spring of 1893, they went to Den-

ver to present to Mr. Beatty their field notes and their plan. Mr. Beatty was well pleased, but a financial panic was upon the country and it was quite impossible to proceed at that time. Mr. Beatty made a trip to New York to try to interest Eastern capital. He succeeded but slightly, and most of what he did get was merely paper. Messers. Rockwood and Perry had become so imbued with the spirit of the great enterprise that they determined to put everything they had into it in order to realize their dream.

Another problem that presented itself was that of securing land rights in the Mexican part of the Valley. The land through which the main canal must be cut was owned by General Andrade, Mexican Consul in Los Angeles. The thing that complicated the situation was that a firm in Scotland held an option on the land. Mr. Rockwood journeyed to Scotland in a vain attempt to interest the holders of the option.

On his return from Scotland, Mr. Rockwood met Mr. John C. Beatty in Providence, Rhode Island, surrounded by luxuries purchased, it is said, with the money from the stock he had sold.[2] Mr. Rockwood was too modest a man to tolerate that sort of proceedings, so he dropped Mr. Beatty forever. Mr. Rockwood, however, was an engineer and not a promoter. He needed assistance in the handling of the financial side of the project. He therefore looked for another associate. He soon decided that Mr. Samuel W. Ferguson was his man. Mr. Ferguson was the manager of the Kern River Land Company and formerly a land agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad. He was honest, dependable, aggressive and experienced as a promoter. The two men became associated. Their first move was to borrow $5,000 from Dr. W. T. Heffernan, a Yuma physician, for an option on the Andrade land in Mexico, the Scotland option having expired.

An eccentric old character named Hal Hanlon owned the land where the heading would have to be placed. The land was practically valueless except for that one purpose, but Hanlon held onto it stubbornly, demanding $20,000. He would listen to neither pleas nor reason. Finally it was purchased by Mr. Rockwood and his associates, Messrs. Perry and Ferguson. They paid $2,000 down, which they had also borrowed from Dr. Heffernan, their Yuma friend.

Mr. Rockwood next interested Mr. Anthony H. Heber of Chicago. Mr. Heber was a promoter of some prominence. He left a good position to come West and enter

2. Howe, "Story of the First Decade;" also statements of early settlers.

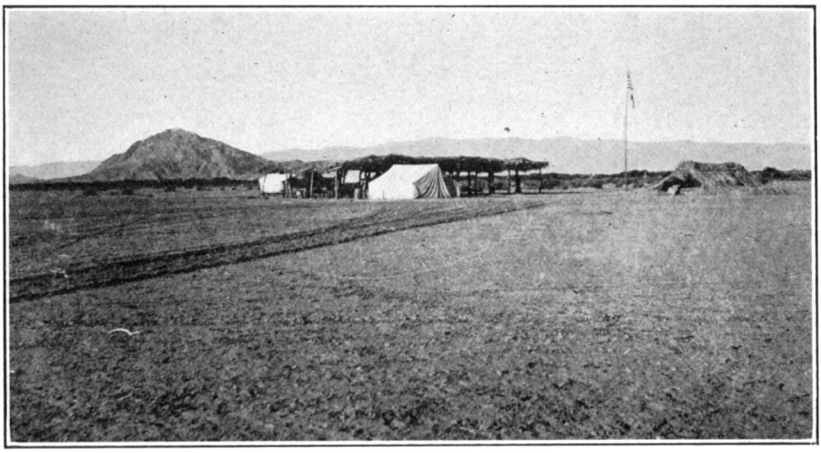
the work with Mr. Rockwood. He also left his wife and four children, telling them he would not be gone more than six months. It was four years before he returned. Mr. Heber had enthusiasm, ambition, confidence and business ability. Messrs. Rockwood, Heber and Ferguson incorporated under the laws of New Jersey, April 26, 1896. They called their firm the "California Development Company." They were capitalized for $1,250,000. Mr. Heber was made president.

In the summer of 1897, Mr. Rockwood endured a two-months illness in a Boston hospital. While in that city in the interest of his beloved Valley, he was taken with typhoid fever, and there he suffered alone among strangers. The illness was serious, but his life was spared for the work he had yet to do.

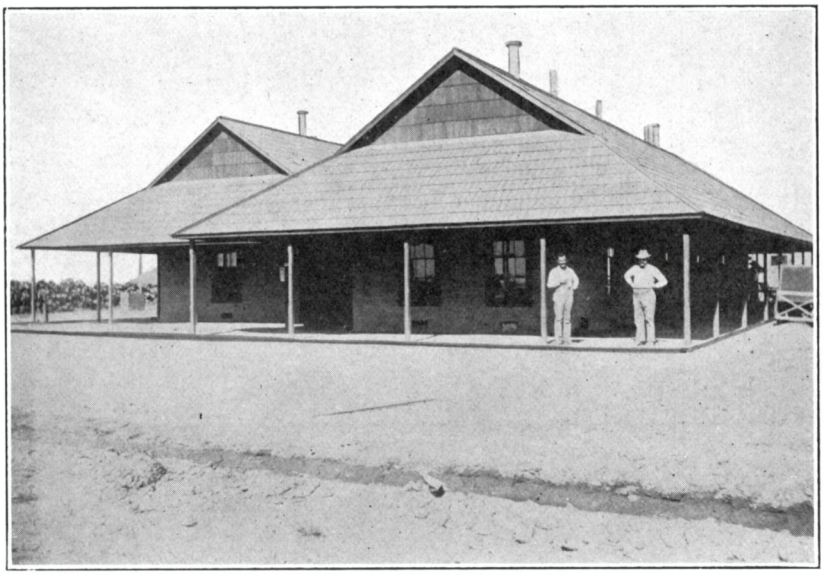
On his recovery, he made a second trip to Europe in search of capital. There were two men there whom he hoped to interest in his cause. When he arrived he learned that they had both died since he began his journey. He gained nothing by this second trip to Europe. Mr. Rockwood was by this time weary and discouraged, but it never occurred to him to give up the struggle. He had the tenacity of a bulldog.

On his return, he interested Mr. Silas B. Dutcher, President of the Hamilton Trust Company of Brooklyn. Mr. Dutcher agreed to finance the project. Mr. Heber was also in New York at the time. The two men were so elated over the success that they spent their last $2 on a dinner to celebrate the victory. The next morning the papers came out with the announcement that the "Maine" had been sunk in Havana Harbor! This created uncertainty in the financial situation in the country as a consequence of which Mr. Dutcher refused to carry out the agreement. War and financial depression followed. This meant hard times for the Company.

Suddenly Mr. Rockwood received word from Tyndall and Monk, an English firm, to come to London and close the deal. They would finance the project, they said. In almost uncontrollable joy, Mr. Rockwood journeyed to England for the third time. He was joined soon afterward by Mr. Heber. The deal was practically complete, and the two men hurried back to America to begin operations. Hardly had they reached this country, when the London company cabled that they could not complete the transaction. They gave no reasons. It has ever since remained a mystery.



The Camp at Cameron Lake.



Headquarters of the California Development Company

The two men were now almost penniless. Mr. Rockwood had wealthy friends in Detroit whom he thought he might interest, but he did not have the money to take him there. Mrs. Heber had some valuable jewelry which was pawned to provide the means of Mr. Rockwood's trip to Detroit. Mr. Rockwood did not know until many years afterward where Mr. Heber secured the money for that trip.

After all, it was useless. Mr. Rockwood was then stranded in Detroit. At this point he had to accept a position with a Boston firm to go to Porto Rico and perform some expert services there. Mr. Heber was tired out; he returned to his family after four years of fruitless effort. Mr. Rockwood became president of the Company. He was not as elated over the honor as one might suppose, for it all looked so hopeless. Apparently every possible source of capital had been exhausted. Those most interested had also used up all their private resources. Mr. Rockwood was indeed discouraged. Could his fond dream ever be realized? The plans were complete. Every detail had been carefully thought out. All that was lacking was the money to carry out the work. The total liabilities of the California Development Company at this time were $1,365,000. There was nothing to show for it but the filing on the River and the camp and surveying equipment. Even the filing had to be renewed. The Attorney-General of New Jersey began suit to cancel the charter of the Company for non-payment of the annual tax to the state.

Mr. Ferguson was the man who at last found a capitalist to finance the project. He telegraphed to Mr. Rockwood and the latter lost no time in reaching Los Angeles to meet Mr. George Chaffey.

Mr. George Chaffey was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1848. He was forced to leave school at the age of fourteen because of ill health. For a while he worked for his uncle, who was a contracting engineer. Later he joined his father in the steamship business. He was captain of several vessels and had a first class engineer's certificate. In '78, he won recognition as a ship builder. In time, his parents moved to Riverside, California. He came to visit them and remained here.

In '81, he and his brother, W. B. Chaffey, founded Etiwanda. He devised a mutual water company for that community, which became a model for all southern California. In '82, he designed a small power plant in connection with the Etiwanda irrigation system, to run a dynamo, and thus operated the first electric light in southern

California. The same year he installed in Los Angeles the first electric system in the world for street lighting. Also in the same year, he founded Ontario, California, and originated and endowed Chaffey College there.

The government of Victoria, Australia, became so interested in his work that it sent for him. He went, and accomplished great desert reclamation work there, besides founding several colonies. He then returned to the United States. His attention was called to the Imperial Valley. He considered it the greatest opportunity ever presented for reclamation work. He saw only the physical side. He did not investigate the financial side; but plunged immediately into construction work. On April 3, 1900, Mr. Chaffey signed a contract which practically gave him complete control for five years.

Mr. Chaffey experienced considerable difficulty with the Mexican government in getting permission to run the canals through Mexican territory. He had to agree to colonize part of the country in return for the desired permission.

Mr. Chaffey was with the Company only twenty-two months. In that brief time he constructed 400 miles of canals and laterals. His prestige secured publicity through the New York *Times, Tribune,* and *Post,* the Philadelphia *Press,* and the *Scientific American.* These papers gave much news space and made editorial comments on the enterprise.

Immediate colonization was the condition under which Mr. Chaffey joined the Company. The colonists were to take up land under the Desert Land Act. Accordingly, in March of 1900, the Imperial Land Company was organized. It was to be the colonizing agency. It was to receive 25% of the gross sales of water stock in the United States and of land sales in Mexico. It was to have all the town-site rights and was invested with all rights to power, light, telephone, railroad, and other similar franchises throughout the Valley.

Mr. Chaffey invested much money besides putting up his personal possessions as security for the Company. Los Angeles banks would not accept Valley securities. This curtailed the credit previously enjoyed by Mr. Chaffey and his brother. Mr. Chaffey brought the Company, from no assets but a camp and surveying equipment and liabilities to the amount of $1,365,000, up to a surplus of $342,687.16.

The actual work was begun by Mr. C. N. Perry at Flowing Wells in April, 1900. The first work on the canals

was done in December of the same year. The camp was next moved to Cameron Lake, which was an enlargement of New River. It was a beauty spot, an oasis in the desert. It was named after Mr. Cameron, a San Diego rancher who grazed his cattle there. Fishing was excellent, but the water was too bad for drinking, so the camp was moved again to Silsbee.

Silsbee was situated on beautiful Blue Lake. Here the drinking water was better than at Cameron Lake, but still too bad for permanent use. It was here that the first Fourth of July celebration in the Valley was held, in 1900.

Mr. George Hunt located in the Valley that same year, and six months later established the California and Mexico Company. In this, he interested General H. G. Otis of the Los Angeles *Times*. The result was the purchase of a ranch consisting of some 700,000 acres, partly in the United States and partly in Mexico.

The Imperial Land Company began an extensive publicity campaign. Settlers began coming in great numbers. In the fall of 1900, there was one voting precinct in the Valley. Ten men voted there at the election that year.

Cameron Lake, being nearer the border, was a more convenient location for the camp than Silsbee. For this reason, the camp was moved back to Cameron Lake.

In the fall of 1900, the Imperial Land Company laid out the town-sites of Imperial, Calexico, Brawley, Heber, and Silsbee. Imperial was built up first. The Land Company did a flourishing business with headquarters there. A post office was established and Dr. Heffernan was made post master.

For convenience, the camp was again moved to the American side of the boundary line on the east side of New River on the town-site of Calexico. The history of Calexico itself begins at this point. However, the story that goes before is necessary to the intelligent understanding of what follows. Calexico is the outgrowth of the reclamation of the Colorado Desert, and its history would not be complete without an account of the great reclamation work which made it possible. The early history of the Imperial Valley and that of Calexico are one and the same, and so cannot possibly be separated.

Chapter III.

Early Life in Calexico, 1901 to 1905

It is well at this point to present a resumé of the conditions under which these brave pioneers existed. The temperature varied between 100 and 120 degrees for a large part of the year. There was no ice and no shade save the "ramada," which was always the first structure to be erected in a community. It consisted of four or more uprights supporting a frame which was roofed over with dry brush. There were frequent sand storms, the fury of which must be experienced to be realized. One of these storms, worse than the average, laid low every tent in the settlement. Water had to be hauled from Indian Wells, one mile south of Silsbee. It was brought in a barrel dragged on a sled by a mule.

Passengers coming to Calexico had to leave the train at Flowing Wells and journey by stage to Imperial and the remainder of the distance by wagon. Freight was brought from the railroad by regular "freighters." These were heavy wagons drawn by a long string of mules. This "freighter" took enough water for the round trip, when it started from Flowing Wells. At regular intervals it would drop off a barrel of water to provide for the water supply on the return trip.

Construction work progressed very slowly for lack of money. Always the same monster, lack of capital, hovered over the project. The cost of construction always exceeded the available capital. The settlers were becoming restless, and they desired to have the Government to take over the work so that it might not be retarded for want of money. The Yuma project was being carried on at that time, and the settlers turned envious eyes on the progress being made there.

However, water reached the boundary line in June of 1901. A luxuriant growth of vegetation followed the water along the ditches, proving that water was all that was needed to make the desert bloom. Sorgum, milo maize, wheat, and barley were raised near Calexico, also a test crop of cantaloupes, which was a thorough success. Travelers noticed the similarity of conditions there with conditions in Egypt. This suggested the possibility of cotton. The California Development Company tested out a few rows of cotton with marvelous success. By December, 1901, some 78,000 acres of land had been filed on, and actual work was begun on about 8,000 acres.

The year 1902 opened with glowing prospects, which, however, were soon dampened by the reports of the Government. In the publications of the Department of Agriculture, (Bureau of Soils, Circular No. 9, 1902) the percent of alkali in the soil was exaggerated. People were warned to stay away from the land there. They were advised to abandon the worst of it completely and raise only certain crops on the best of the land. This was a severe blow to the Company. It discouraged the settlers who were already there, and undoubtedly kept many prospective settlers from coming. It was also bad for the Company financially, as it made capital still harder to obtain. In spite of this handicap, the Valley continued to prosper. By this time, colonists were literally pouring in.

The first woman to file on land in the Valley was Mrs. Shenk. The land is now the "C. C. Ranch."

Hard feelings had arisen between the Chaffey brothers and the original stockholders. In conclusion of the difficulty, the Messrs. Chaffey accepted $300,000 for their interest in the Company, and retired. To Mr. George Chaffey is due the credit for the material beginnings of the reclamation of that desert. Dr. Wozencraft and Mr. Rockwood dreamed and struggled, but Mr. Chaffey built. The aggregate credit, however, is more theirs than his, since it was not vision, courage nor ability that they lacked, but only money, which Mr. Chaffey was able to supply.

The telephone and telegraph came into the Valley about this time. The joy of the settlers on having telephone connection with Los Angeles was unbounded.

The first permanent building in Calexico was a small adobe which still stands, between the railroad and the border. It was built by Edward Aiken & Co. and was the home of the International Bank. The adobe building, which now houses the offices of the Irrigation District, was also built at this time. Very shortly thereafter, Dr. Heffernan built a store building, also of adobe, on the corner of Second Street and Imperial Avenue.

The remainder of the settlement was composed of a ramada and tents. It was the custom for the owner to tie his tent flaps when he was away from home. This was the only lock that was needed. Practically never was anything stolen.

Among these crude surroundings in 1901 the Valley's first child was born in a tent. Her parents were Mr. and

Mrs. Thomas Beach. They named her "Cameron," after the lake. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Beach and Mr. Frank Thing later boasted the first frame residences.

Messrs. Perry and Beach planted the first trees in the town in the yard of the Beach home, along Imperial Avenue and on the California Development Company's grounds. It was they also who conducted the cotton experiment.

The first school was taught by Mr. J. E. Carr. It was situated under a ramada three miles north and three miles west of Calexico, about midway between the towns of Calexico and Imperial. The district was known as the Imperial School District of San Diego County. The next year the school was moved into a tent three miles east, which placed it on what is now the highway between Calexico and El Centro on the main canal. Hon. John Shenk succeeded Mr. Carr as teacher.

In 1904 the district was divided, and a school located in Imperial and one in Calexico. It was held in the same tent which was moved into town and set up on the corner of Third Street and Imperial Avenue and was shared by the Methodist Church. Miss Gaskill, now Mrs. P. W. Preston, was the first teacher in the town school. The following year a school building was constructed and Miss McWilliams, now Mrs. J. E. Peck, and Miss Nautridge were the teachers. There were 113 pupils at this time. The building still stands (1923) and is now used for the primary department of the Hoffman School.

The system of administering justice was unique. Mr. J. B. Hoffman was the first Justice of the Peace both in the entire Valley and in the town. There was no jail, so Mr. Hoffman improvised one. He chained a log to two mesquite trees and then chained his prisoners, by the ankle, to the log. The offenders were chiefly drunken Mexicans and Indians. Later a small frame building was constructed for a jail.[1]

Occasionally it was necessary to take a prisoner to San Diego, the county seat. The stage line across the mountains had long since been discontinued, so it was necessary to go to Los Angeles *via* the Southern Pacific and there change to the Santa Fé and go down the coast to San Diego. The round trip took four days.

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1. "Bob" Davis gained the reputation of being the 'town nuisance.' He continually broke the laws but was never convicted because nothing could be proved against him. He was very proud of his achievements and continually boasted of them. On one occasion while he was being detained in the jail, he upset it, and still later he burned it.

Mr. Charles A. Sanborn was the Customs officer. The United States Customs service first established a station at Calexico about October 1, 1902. The first building occupied as a customs house was located on Imperial Avenue near the present railway crossing, and the official crossing to Mexico was an extension of Imperial Avenue. On July 1, 1904, the customs office was moved to a frame building on the northwest corner of Rockwood Avenue and First Street, and Rockwood Avenue was used as the official crossing into Mexico. The Immigration service and the Customs service were housed together until 1903, when the Immigration service became a separate office.

The religious needs of the community were first met by church services held in the dining room of the California Development Company's building. It was during one of these services that the Valley's first tragedy was announced. Mr. Perry was sitting in his office when Charlie Dow, the Chinese cook, came rushing in and shouted, "Mr. Pelly! One man plenty dead!" Upon investigation, he was found to be right. A man had been killed, but the murderer was never detected. The same Charlie Dow soon opened the first bakery in the town.

The Methodists and the Congregationalists both claim to be the oldest church. Both started in 1904.

During these early years there was but one piano in the town. This was borrowed for every important occasion and hauled about on a two-wheeled cart.

It was about this time also that Mexicali started. It was a natural outgrowth of Calexico, being the part of the settlement on the Mexican side of the line. The two towns were named by Mr. L. M. Holt (no relation to Mr. W. F. Holt.) Mr. Holt was a cripple and was popularly known as "Limpy." He disjoined the names California and Mexico and reassembled the syllables and evolved therefrom the names Calexico and Mexicali. It was also he who gave the Imperial Valley its name, although the credit is usually given to Mr. Chaffey.

Life was not all work and no play with the pioneers. They did more than their share of work, but when they played, they played equally hard. Horse racing was perhaps the leading sport. Imperial Avenue was the race track, and many and exciting were the races held there.

Another amusement was provided by fastening a five or a ten dollar bill to the end of a well-greased pole, then swinging the pole out over one of the irrigation ditches.

Anyone wishing to climb for the prize was welcome to do so. Ninety percent of the contestants landed in the ditch. This sport was an unending source of merriment.

In the fall of 1902, the Southern Pacific Company began work on the extension from Old Beach (now Niland) to Calexico. It was complete and in full operation in May of the following year.

With the railroad came many other conveniences, not the least of which was ice. It is difficult to imagine how these early pioneers survived the heat without ice. It is no wonder that the day of its coming was celebrated as a legal holiday. All business was suspended for the afternoon and the town had a big party at which everyone ate ice-cream.

Very soon after the coming of the railroad, the "boom" began. By that time there were over 700 miles of canals in the Valley.

A small settlement had grown up around Barne's store a quarter of a mile east of the present town limits and a quarter of a mile north of the border. It was thought that this settlement would be the town and Calexico would be merely the Company's headquarters. Natural growth, however, disproved this theory, and in 1904 the post office was moved from Barnes to Calexico. The store soon followed the post office, and today nothing is left of Barnes but the memory.

The post office was placed in Dr. Heffernan's store at Second Street and Imperial Avenue. Joe Estudillo was the post master.

This same year also witnessed a great auction sale of lots. Regular excursions were operated from Los Angeles and many were the families who came to make their homes on the newly reclaimed desert.

Prominent among the arrivals of that year were Mr. and Mrs. John Steindorf. Mr. Steindorf started the International Lumber Company (now Calexico Lumber Company) at Fifth and Emerson Streets. The Steindorfs have been among Calexico's leading citizens ever since. Mrs. Steindorf was the first president of the Womens' Club and will be spoken of again in that connection.

The Calexico *Chronicle* printed its first issue in a tent under a mesquite tree in 1904. Mr. Overshiner was everything, including owner, editor, printer and janitor. The next year he sold out to Mr. W. F. Holt, who moved the

equipment to a frame building at First Street and Imperial Avenue.

A brick factory was started to meet the demands of the "boom." Messrs. Harbour and Peterson came from Los Angeles with a knowledge of brick making. Bricks were easy to sell but not so easy to make under desert conditions. It was such hot work that it was very difficult to secure labor. However, they started a kiln at Calexico and made brick, the first of which were used in the Calexico Hotel. Mr. Peterson did most of the work, and the firm not only made brick but took contracts for putting up the buildings. They built about 95% of the brick buildings in the entire Valley up to 1910. The factory was soon after discontinued.

The Mount Signal district took form about this time.

Before passing on to later times, let us make a closer acquaintance with the real builders of the Valley and the town of Calexico. As has already been stated, the Company's headquarters were at Calexico. Mr. C. R. Rockwood, the real Father of the Valley, was Chief Engineer and General Manager. Mrs. Rockwood was with him, helping him, sharing his disappointments and doing the countless things which pioneer women always do but for which they seldom receive credit or glory.

Mr. C. N. Perry was Mr. Rockwood's right-hand man. His official capacity was that of Assistant Chief Engineer. His work for the Valley can never be measured. He is a leader in every sense of the word. He has a large square jaw that betrays the determination of a bulldog, yet it is directed by a keen intellect. He has foresight, wisdom and industry. He has the strength of a giant, yet the gentleness of a child. Mrs. Perry's fortitude and character are also evidenced by the fact that she stood by her husband's side through all those early struggles.

Messrs. E. H. Gaines, F. F. Hall and D. L. Russell were also engineers on the project. Mr. L. R. Rockwood, brother of the Chief, was a chain-man. He is still one of Calexico's citizens. At present he is proprietor of the "Rockwood Lodge."

Mr. J. B. Hoffman, who came from Pennsylvania, was with the Company from the first, in various positions. It was he who pitched the first human habitation on the site of Calexico, namely his tent. At present he is president of the Mexican-Chinese Ginning Company. Mr. Hoffman is kindly and jovial, yet he has a character that is strong and true as steel. Mrs. Hoffman came to the Valley in 1903

as Miss Florence Gould, to visit Mrs. Perry. She remained as Mrs. Hoffman. She is a true pioneer woman who has borne the hardships patiently. Her nature is sweet and gentle. She has done far more than a woman's share in this world's work, for not only did she help in the pioneering, but she reared a splendid family as well. Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman are still among the leaders in Calexico.

Mr. Frank Thing, it will be remembered, grazed his cattle in the Valley before settlement began. In 1902 he opened a butcher-shop in Imperial and shortly thereafter opened one in Calexico also. His brother shared the business with him. They killed their own stock and bought and sold cattle and hogs. Later they expanded their meat shop into a general merchandise business. Mr. Thing was at that time a bachelor. It was not until 1908 that his future wife came to Calexico. Mr. Thing is a man with the true pioneer spirit. This means strength, both physical and mental. It means dauntless courage and untiring industry.

Doctor Heffernan has already been referred to as assisting to finance the project. He was not only a financier but a real pioneer as well. Previous to his arrival in the Valley, he was a physician in Yuma. He was a resident of Calexico from the first and still has his office there. In the early days he served as Commissary for the Company.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Beach came to Cameron Lake in 1900. Mr. Beach was one of the builders of the town and Mrs. Beach, one of the small band of women whose services can not be measured. The Beach family now resides in Los Angeles, and their little girl, Cameron, the Valley's first-born, is married.

Mr. J. E. Peck came to the Valley in the summer of 1901 with his college friend, John Shenk. The latter remained a year as teacher of the district school. Mr. Peck became a draftsman for the Company. Later he was their silt expert. At present, he is owner of the J. E. Peck Lumber Company at El Centro. Mrs. Peck has already been referred to as Miss McWilliams, one of the first teachers in the town school. Throughout the years, she has been active in school, club and civic affairs.

The story of the early days would hardly be complete without mention of old Borego, the town's Indian mascot. He was a character such as one seldom meets even in storybooks. He was past eighty, had no money and needed none. He lived on what he could pick up, an odd job for a meal here, another there. Often meals were given him.

He slept anywhere. Why should he care where? His queerest trait was that of wearing everything he had. People were generous in gifts of discarded clothing and he wore them all at one time! Perhaps he would have three or four vests and as many coats on when the thermometer was over 100. When questioned as to why he wore them all, he would always reply with the question, "What else shall I do with them?" He was everyone's friend and no one's enemy.

The early comers to the Valley were of three distinct classes: The first class was comprised of men who had strength, courage and determination. The second class was much smaller in numbers and consisted of men of wealth who took up large tracts of land for speculation. The third class was composed of adventurers who had no money and very little determination or courage. They desired only to sow little and reap much. Through natural processes, this class disappeared. It soon found that the reward could not so easily be gained. Men of this class were, at first, numerous and had considerable unfavorable influence upon the better people at that time, but they added nothing of value to the history of the Valley.

The early days were days that tested men and women. They went through wind, fire and flood. The weaker ones returned to the comforts of advanced civilization. Only the strongest remained. The result of this natural sifting is a strong, homogeneous mass of people. It has left only people of sturdy character who are self-reliant and aggressive.

Out of this class of people has grown the far-famed "Spirit of the Valley." This spirit is intangible yet it is definitely felt by everyone who has lived there. It is composed of ability to do things and the desire to do things well. It is a feeling of faith in one's self and in the Valley. It is optimism to the limit of good sense. It is a feeling of confidence in others as well as one's self. It involves the spirit of cooperation and extends wide-open arms to the stranger who is made of the right kind of stuff and will, himself, enter into the "Spirit of the Valley."

Chapter IV.

The Floods, 1905-1906.

In order to understand the conditions that caused the floods, it is necessary to give a moment's attention to the geography of that region. The Colorado River flows in a general southerly direction, while the Alamo and New Rivers, only a few miles west of the Colorado, flow in a northerly direction. The reason for this apparent contradiction in the nature of things is that the land through which the two smaller rivers flow is the bed of the old Salton Sink. It is separated from the Colorado by a low range of hills and slopes to the north. The lowest point now holds the Salton Sea, the surface which is some 240 feet below sea level. The Colorado flows on the very rim of the Valley.

In 1903 the Government denied the Valley the use of the waters of the Colorado River. Mr. A. H. Heber had influential friends in Congress, and he made a noble and desperate fight for the rights of the people of the Valley. In the session of 1903-04, he caused a bill to be introduced which admitted that the Colorado was more valuable for irrigation than for navigation. The Reclamation Service opposed the bill. Finally a committee composed of House members and reclamation officials made a brief visit to the Valley and returned an adverse report. The result was that Congress refused the people of the Valley the use of waters of the Colorado River.

In June of 1904 Mr. Heber entered into a contract with President Diaz of Mexico whereby the California Development Company might take the Colorado's waters through Mexico where the United States had no jurisdiction, the only condition being that in case of a shortage, Mexico could retain half the water if it was needed on her own soil. The Mexican congress ratified the contract. For another reason also it was necessary to cut a new intake somewhere along the course of the River, for the first four miles of the main canal had become so coated with silt as to make it impossible to supply the necessary amount of water to the 10,000 settlers of the Valley. This silt might have been removed, but the new cut was the quicker and the cheaper way.

Accordingly, the Mexican intake was cut under the direction of Engineer Rockwood in October, 1904. It was 50 feet wide. The water was low, and it was not expected to rise before the early part of the summer. This would

allow plenty of time to construct a permanent gate and thus close the gap before flood time.

The Mexican government was exceedingly slow in ratifying the plans for the permanent gate. Its approval was necessary, hence haste was urged. The desired sanction, however, did not come for a whole year, or until December of 1905.

In February, 1905, there came an unexpected flood. When it had subsided, it left the intake so silted up that it had to be dredged again in order to get enough water through it to supply the Valley's needs. A second flood produced the same result. The Imperial Valley Press of July 25, 1916 informs us that a single day's supply of water for the Imperial Valley contains enough sediment to build a levee twenty feet high, twenty feet wide and a mile long. In view of these facts, fear of the floods diminished. It was not until the third flood of the season, in March, that the engineers realized that they were facing an unusual season and therefore decided to immediately close the gap.

Consequently, a dam of piles, brush, and sand bags was thrown across the gap. It was just completed when another flood came and washed it away. A second dam was built and promptly shared the same fate. This last flood widened the gap from 60 to 160 feet. Water was overflowing the banks of the main canal and running in a hundred streams to the lowest part of the sink. Here it was accumulating and forming the new Salton Sea.

The danger was now keenly appreciated by Messrs. Rockwood, Perry, and their associates, but they were powerless to cope with the situation for lack of money. To meet the urgent need, they appealed to the Southern Pacific Railroad for a loan of $200,000. This loan was granted by the late H. E. Harriman against the advice of his councilors. It was agreed that the Southern Pacific was to have control of 51% of the Company's stock until the loan was repaid and have the right to appoint three of its directors, one of whom was to act as president of the Company. Mr. Epes Randolph of Tucson, formerly connected with the Pacific Electric Company in Los Angeles, was appointed president.

Mr. Randolph made a personal investigation and telegraphed Mr. Harriman that it might cost three-quarters of a million to save the Valley. Mr. Harriman wired back directions to proceed.

Mr. Rockwood then attempted to divert the river to the east side of the island opposite the gap by means of a

jetty. This method proved unsuccessful and had to be abandoned.

The Southern Pacific Company next, under the direction of their engineer, E. S. Edinger, put in a 600 foot dam of piling, brush mattresses, and sand bags, at a cost of $60,000. This dam was built in October and November. On November 29-30 came a tremendous flood which increased the flow of water from 12,000 to 115,000 cubic feet per second. The new dam was washed out completely. Scarcely a vestige of it was to be seen. Also the northern part of the island was washed away. This terrific flood widened the gap to 600 feet. Most of the river went tearing through it in a mad rush for the Salton Sea, which already had an area of 150 square miles. If this continued, the Valley would again be, as it had been in the past, at the bottom of a lake.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty that the engineers had to face was that of supplying the necessary water to the inhabitants while the engineering work was in progress. They dared not cut off the water supply while they were closing the gap.

A method of control was suggested by Engineer Rockwood, namely, to construct a permanent steel and concrete gate at Pilot Knob, where solid rock foundation could be secured, and dredge out the 4 miles of silted canal. Then, when the water was low, most of it could be run through this gate and channel, leaving the lower gap dry enough to construct a permanent dam or levee there. This could be done before the next high water was expected.

Mr. Rockwood also planned to build a new headgate on the northern side of the intake and divert the entire river around the gap *via* a by-pass, while it was being permanently closed. The chief objection to this plan was that it would necessarily be of wood on a silt foundation and might be undermined.

In November Mr. Randolph decided to try both plans, working on them simultaneously. Contracts for the structural iron and steel work for the concrete gate were let in Los Angeles. Machinery for an 850 ton floating dredge, the "Delta," was ordered in San Francisco. Work was pushed hard throughout the winter. The steel and concrete headgate was not completed until June 28. The "Delta," owing to the San Francisco disaster, was not ready for work until the following November.

Work on the Rockwood gate continued day and night with alternate shifts. It was completed on the 18th of

April, the very day of the great earthquake and fire at San Francisco. Mr. Harriman had rushed to the scene of the tragedy. The next day the maddest flood of all came tearing down the Colorado. It was far beyond the capacity of the newly completed dam, washing it out as if it were so much kindling! The river was like an angry monster that would not be bound by human fetters. The crevasse was ever widening and the whole Colorado poured through it at the rate of 4,000,000,000 cubic feet per day.

Mr. Rockwood's disappointment must have been the keenest suffering, for it was not lack of knowledge that made his work fail, but the ever-present lack of capital with which to operate. Nevertheless, he resigned, and Mr. H. T. Cory, Mr. Randolph's assistant, was put in absolute control.

In June came another flood that widened the gap to over half a mile. The whole river was running into the Valley, leaving the channel to the Gulf dry. Once in the Valley, the river spread to a width of eight to ten miles. Then it divided into separate streams that ran into the Salton Sea. Thousands of acres of crops were drowned and thousands of acres more were so badly eroded that the land can never again be cultivated. The works of the New Liverpool Salt Company were under sixty feet of water.

At the height of the flood, 75,000 cubic feet of water poured through the gap every second, or 6,000,000,000 cubic feet every 24 hours. Salton Sea rose at the rate of 7 inches per day and soon covered an area of 400 square miles. The main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad had to be moved to higher ground five times that season.

The "cutting back" was the most dangerous feature of the flood. The lower stratum of soil was badly cracked. All the soil was soft silt, and when the water washed against the lower stratum in its cracked condition, it washed out like powdered sugar, causing the upper strata to collapse. This "cutting back" action worked up stream at the rate of 1,500 to 4,000 feet per day, leaving behind it, a deep, ever-widening gorge. The channel remains today a silent evidence of the great floods. It varies in depth from 50 to 80 feet, has an average width of 1,000 feet, and is more than 40 miles long. The amount of soil thus gouged out was nearly four times as much as the total digging for the Panama Canal.

It was imperative that this "cutting back" be stopped, for, if it were allowed to continue, it would soon cut into the canals of the irrigation system. This would send all

the irrigating water down the Alamo and New rivers and thus ruin the entire system. Also it would cut off the water supply for the 12,000 settlers, who were absolutely dependent upon it. There was more danger that people would be driven out of the Valley for want of drinking water than there was that they would be drowned out.

The towns of Calexico and Mexicali were directly in the path that the river was cutting back. Could they be saved? Engineer Perry directed the building of a levee six feet high around the river-side of the town. Every man, woman, and child worked until exhausted filling bags with sand, earth, or anything available. Every shovel in town was in use, even sauce-pans were wrung into use for the purpose. Every horse and mule in the vicinity was put to work on the levee. This work continued for 48 feverish, anguishing hours. No one slept except from exhaustion. No one thought of removing his clothing.

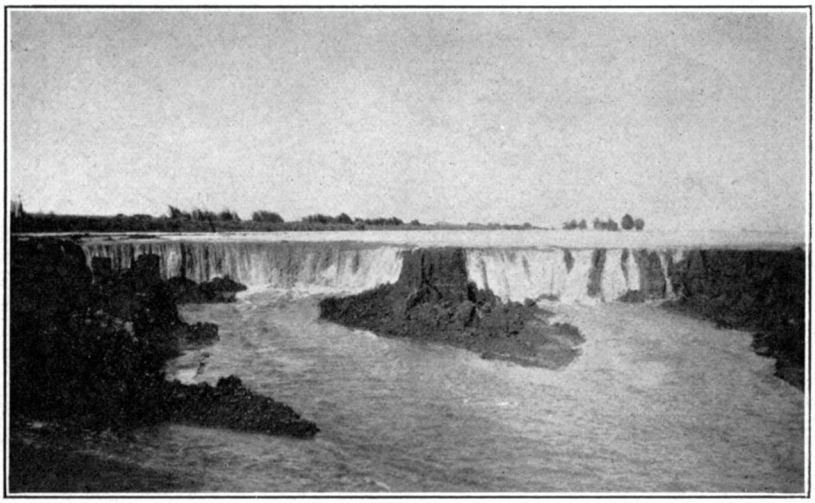
Would the dike hold? The fate of two cities depended upon it. Now and then it would break through somewhere and the water would pour in on the town. With a scream and a dash, the whole force of workers would turn their energies to the new break. Every household in town brought out its bedding, mattresses and everything that would be useful to stuff into the breaks.

Mr. Perry was on duty the whole time directing the work. It took the strength of a mighty man to endue that strain, but Mr. Perry was equal to the emergency.

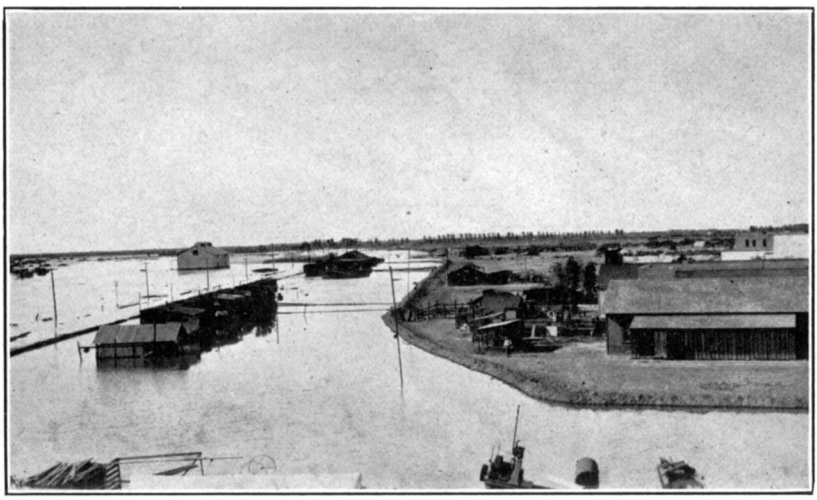
There was a row of stately cottonwood trees along one side of the Company offices, that had been tenderly raised and were highly prized. Now, in this supreme struggle, these trees had to give their lives to help save the town, Under Mr. Perry's direction, they were hewn down and suspended by chains in the river channel that the angry waters might beat against them and thus spare the bank on the Calexico side of the river. The noble trees did their work well. They saved that bank.

As if there were not already enough to contend with, a mad wind was racing across the Valley. This added greatly to the difficulty of the fight, for it blew out the lanterns and drowned men's voices when they tried to shout orders or call for help.

The Company hastily constructed a tent on stilts back a safe distance from the flood. The safe was moved to the new "office," and all valuable papers were taken there for safe keeping. The Southern Pacific depot was on the



The "cutting back" of the river.



Flood scene showing the levee.

river side of the levee; hence, in order to save it, it was hastily taken down in sections and moved to safety.

Everything on the river side of the dike went floating down the stream. The water tank went out the first night, leaving the town without its supply of pure water. The irrigation water is so laden with sediment that it is the color of chocolate, hence this added difficulty will be appreciated.

At last, after the second horrible night, the flood began to subside. When the waters had fallen to a safe level, all Calexico slept from sheer exhaustion.

The next morning smiled down on a much-relieved town on one side of the levee and on desolation on the other side. Mr. Perry's brains, plus everyone's strength, energy, and courage, saved Calexico. West of the levee, as far as the eye could see, was one vast expanse of water. People constructed flat boats and barges on which to travel about.

Here and there a high place showed itself in the form of an island on which were crowded whole families that had taken refuge on the highest spots they could find. This situation was more common on the Mexican than on the American side of the boundary. Rescue work was promptly begun, but it was very slow and exceedingly dangerous since the current was so swift and there were so many impediments in the river. The rescue boats frequently became entangled in the tree tops and were lost. It took several days and hundreds of unrecorded deeds of bravery to save all the people from the waters of the flood.

The flood waters covered about 6,000 acres, while some 13,000 more were ruined by erosion in side canyons. When the new channel was gouged out, the waters from both sides made a mad rush for the new lower level, leaving devastation in their paths.

The Inter-California Railroad to Yuma had been built as far as Cocopah. This was completely under water. The official crossing from the United States to Mexico had previously been at the foot of Imperial Avenue. This land was all washed away. It was fortunate indeed that the crossing had, in 1904, been moved to the foot of Heber Avenue.

As rapidly as possible, Calexico repaired its damages. The actual loss in the town amounted to about $15,000. Mexicali suffered to the extent of about $75,000.

The whole Colorado, however, was still flowing down the channel of New River and had yet to be turned back into its old course. There was little in recorded history to

help the engineers in their gigantic task. Most floods had merely been overflows, but this was an entirely new problem. This was a roaring river that had changed its course and was rushing madly into an ancient basin below sea level. Three hundred million cubic feet of water every hour were rushing down a 400-foot slope, through easily eroded soil into a basin about the size of Long Island Sound.

This situation was so new that the engineers had nothing upon which to base their opinions. They all disagreed. About the only point upon which they were agreed was that something had to be done at once. The Southern Pacific engineers, then in control of the situation, decided to construct a dam of rock instead of pilings, brush, and sand bags. They quickly constructed a railroad from their main line to the break, for the purpose of hauling rocks and other materials. They next borrowed from the Union Pacific Company 300 "battleships." These were mammoth side-dump cars that had been used in the construction of the Lucin cut-off across Great Salt Lake. They had a capacity of 50 to 60 tons each. The California Development Company had three light-draught steamers and a number of barges that were used on the river. The Southern Pacific furnished work trains and gathered rock, gravel, and other materials including 1,100 ninety-foot piles, 19,000 feet of heavy timber for railway trestles, and 40 miles of steel cable to be used in the weaving of brush mattresses. The Southern Pacific furnished pile drivers and steam shovels, also many engineers, mechanics, and workmen. This resulted in efficiency and speed.

The greatest difficulty was in obtaining common labor. It was impossible to secure enough Mexicans, so Indian tribes were organized and used. These with their families constituted a separate camp of about 2,000 souls. The rest of the laborers were Mexicans and American adventurers. The whole vicinity was put under martial law with a military commandant to police the camps.

Active work began August 6, 1906. The summer floods were then subsiding. First, a woven brush mattress was made in twenty days and nights by two shifts of men. It was made of baling wire, steel cable and 2,000 cords of brush. A total of 13,000 square feet of this mattress was made. It covered the bottom of the gap to the width of 100 feet, double thickness. Its purpose was to serve as a foundation for the rock filling. Next, a railway trestle ten feet wide was built across the crevasse. On the 14th of September, trains of "battleships" began running across

it and dumping rock onto the mattress at the bottom of the stream.

In the mean time, the Rockwood by-pass and headgate were completed. By October 10, only one-tenth of the flow of water was still going over the rock dam. But the Rockwood dam was showing signs of weakness. In the afternoon of October 11, it gave way and went floating down the stream. The by-pass then became the main river. The top of the Southern Pacific dam was left dry. The dam that went out had cost $122,000 and four months of labor.

Now the Southern Pacific went to work clearing out and enlarging the four miles of silted up canal, since the steel and concrete gate above it was ready for use. It might now be opened and thus handle part of the water through the ditches, while another attempt was being made to close both the Rockwood by-pass and the original gap. Operations were pushed night and day. A thousand men and 700 horses and mules were at work. It was planned to construct another rock dam on another brush mattress in the by-pass also, as this type held best. Levees connected the two dams, making a continuous barrier one-half mile long. They extended it to both sides as well.

On November 4 the lower Mexican intake was completely closed. The trouble seemed over and all seemed well. There was rejoicing throughout the Valley.

On December 7, another sudden flood came tearing down the Gila, a branch of the Colorado. A reconstructed earthen dam further to the south went out! The break was at first small, but it widened so rapidly that in three days the whole river was pouring through it and again rushing into the Valley. This demanded immediate action. It also proved that, in order adequately to protect the Valley, a higher, stronger and more massive levee would have to be built on the West side of the river for a distance of at least twenty miles.

The Southern Pacific Company felt that it had done its share. It had already spent over a million and a half, and its financial interests in the Valley would not justify further expenditure.

The United States Government would be the principal loser if the Valley were to be lost. The land taken up by the settlers was still legally in the possession of the Government, pending a correct survey. Besides, if the river were not controlled, it would eventually destroy, not only the Imperial Valley, but the Laguna Dam, which was a pro-

ject of the United States Government to the north. Also, if uncontrolled, the Colorado would cut for itself a gorge from which it would be impossible to draw water for irrigation. The total potentially fertile land that would thus be rendered barren, was more than 2,000 square miles, or enough to support a quarter of a million people.

For these reasons, therefore, the Southern Pacific called upon the United States Government for aid for the Valley. Theodore Roosevelt was President at that time. The Southern Pacific offered the Government the use of its tracks, trains, quarries, laborers, and everything it had in the way of equipment; but it considered that the Government should pay for the work, since the cost would run into millions. The California Development Company also offered all it had to aid in the work.

Congress had just adjourned for the holidays. The Government could not proceed without the authority from Congress nor without arrangements with the Mexican Government. All this time the river was pouring into the Valley, but the water was not alarmingly high and was running more or less peacefully down the Alamo and New River channels. All would be well until the next flood came. The gap *must be* closed before that should occur.

President Roosevelt placed the responsibility on the California Development Company and demanded immediate action by that Company. In the meantime he agreed to try to bring about permanent action on the part of the Government. The California Development Company was powerless to meet the situation for lack of money, so the Southern Pacific again came to the rescue. Mr. Harriman telegraphed to President Roosevelt that the Southern Pacific would proceed to meet the emergency trusting that the Government would assist as soon as it could get action.

The river fighting crew and equipment were still intact; therefore, on December 20, 1916, when the order was given, all the resources of the Southern Pacific were thrown into the work of controlling the river. The crevasse was then 1,100 feet wide and had a maximum depth of 40 feet. The whole river was pouring through the new gap. There was no time to build another brush mattress.

The plan next adopted was to build two railroad trestles over the gap and to have 1,000 flat cars and "battleships" of rock ready all at once and to dump rock faster than it could possibly be carried away by the stream or swallowed by the silt. Three times the piles were torn out and went

floating down the stream and three times were the trestles partly or wholly destroyed. On the 27th of January the first trestle was finished for the fourth time, and the rock dumping process began again.

Men worked night and day with feverish haste. Not a moment was lost. A thousand cars of rock were on the scene and were dumped as fast as they could be "placed" on the trestle. In order to save time, the rocks that were too large to handle were broken on the cars in transit by "pop-shots." This consisted of dynamite so placed as to split the rocks. The roar of the mad waters, the "pop-shots," the shouts of the men, all combined to furnish the excitement that spurred the men on to their maximum speed. Two unknown Mexican laborers gave their lives to the cause. They fell from the trestle into the roaring torrent below.

Once in the water, the rocks settled and rolled down the stream. All this had to be overcome by more dumping. Lastly, small stones and gravel were dumped to fill the places between the big rocks.

The crevasse was finally closed and the river unwillingly forced back into its old channel on February 10, 1907. This was 52 days after Roosevelt asked for help and 15 days after the first load of rock was dumped from the first completed trestle. The work had to be done fast or it would have been lost. It was a question of dumping rock faster than the river could carry it away.

The Southern Pacific also built twelve miles of levees along the west side of the river with a railroad track on top so it can immediately send material to any part of it in case of weakness or a break. Also, they constructed a second levee to the west of the first, to impound the waters in case of a break in the first levee.

The additional cost was approximately $1,600,000. The total expenditure by the Southern Pacific was $3,100,000. The work was done thoroughly. It has stood the test of many a flood and has held. The engineers who directed the final closure and the building of the levees were Messrs. Epes Randolph, H. T. Cory, "Tom" Hinds, and Mr. Clark.

The Southern Pacific completed the work without the aid of the Government and afterward put in a claim for the cost of the operations. This reimbursement bill dragged along in Congress for three years without action. Hearings were held, expert engineers were consulted, and the whole subject was thoroughly discussed. Reimbursement was

urged by most of California's big newspapers and by the Imperial Valley's Chambers of Commerce. It was recommended by Roosevelt and was urgently recommended by Taft, but did not pass Congress. The United States has never paid back the sum of the actual outlay to the Southern Pacific.

Two novels have their setting in the Imperial Valley. Both deal with the early days and both use the floods for the climax. The better known of these is "The Winning of Barbara Worth," written by Harold Bell Wright.

It is a well known fact that Mr. Wright was a preacher in the Ozark country and that he was poor both in money and in health. Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Holt of the Valley were also from the Ozark country and were good friends of Mr. and Mrs. Wright. Mr. Holt had made a financial success in the new country and urged his friend to come there also, thinking that the dry climate would do him good. Mr. and Mrs. Wright made the move, Mr. Holt giving them considerable assistance. Mr. Wright started the ranch now known as the "Wright Place," between El Centro and Holtville. He made a financial success while regaining his health.

Out of appreciation, Mr. Wright wrote "The Winning of Barbara Worth." He idealized his friend Mr. Holt in the character of Mr. Worth. Mr. Holt's daughter was made the heroine but was not actually found on the desert, as the story goes. The successful lover and the hero who closed the gap was Mr. H. T. Cory, while Mr. Rockwood was represented as the Seer. The novel is in no sense a history, although it follows, in a general way, the trend of events in the Valley.

The other novel is "The River," by Edna Aiken. Its scenes are laid in Calexico and at the gap in the bank of the Colorado River. The book was written to idealize Mr. Cory, much to the indignation of Mr. Rockwood's friends. While not historically accurate, the book gives a very true representation of early life, customs, and conditions in the town of Calexico in the early days. Mr. Cory is idealized in the leading part as "Rickard." Mr. Rockwood is cruelly and unjustly characterized as the unsuccessful engineer called, in the story, Tom Hardin. The other characters are all taken from life.

Chapter V.

Developments to 1915

Due to the dauntless character of the people of the Valley, the flood did not affect business conditions nearly as much as would be supposed. Everyone had confidence that the difficulty would be overcome. The "Spirit of the Valley" prevailed. Things went on the usual way.

Owing to the difficulty of getting to their county seat, and to the growing consciousness of the unity of the Valley, agitation was rapidly gaining headway to make the Valley a separate county.

The Pomona district was at the same time trying to break away from Los Angeles County. The State laws granted no authority to counties to subdivide; therefore it was necessary to create a state law giving such authority. Pomona and the Valley joined hands in the fight. They sent representatives to the State Legislature to plead their cause. On March 15, 1907, an act was passed especially for Pomona and Imperial, authorizing the division of counties. Pomona never secured its separation from Los Angeles County, due to the fact that those in favor of separation lost in the election.

The people of the Valley, however, speedily carried through the necessary procedure and became a separate county. A petition was first sent to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, asking for the creation of a new county. The petition was granted. On the 6th of August, 1907, an election was held to determine whether or not the majority of the voters were in favor of separation. The election carried. The towns then voted for El Centro as the most central location for the county seat. El Centro is the Spanish for "the center," and, true to its name, it is approximately the geographical center of the Valley.

The organization and the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the new county took place in the Valley State Bank Building in El Centro on the 26th of August that same year. Mr. F. S. Webster was made Supervisor, since he had previously been Supervisor of the Imperial District of San Diego County. Mr. James B. Hoffman was officially made Justice of the Peace. He had carried on the duties of this office from the very first, by common consent though without official appointment or electon. Mr. D. S. Elder was elected the first County Clerk.

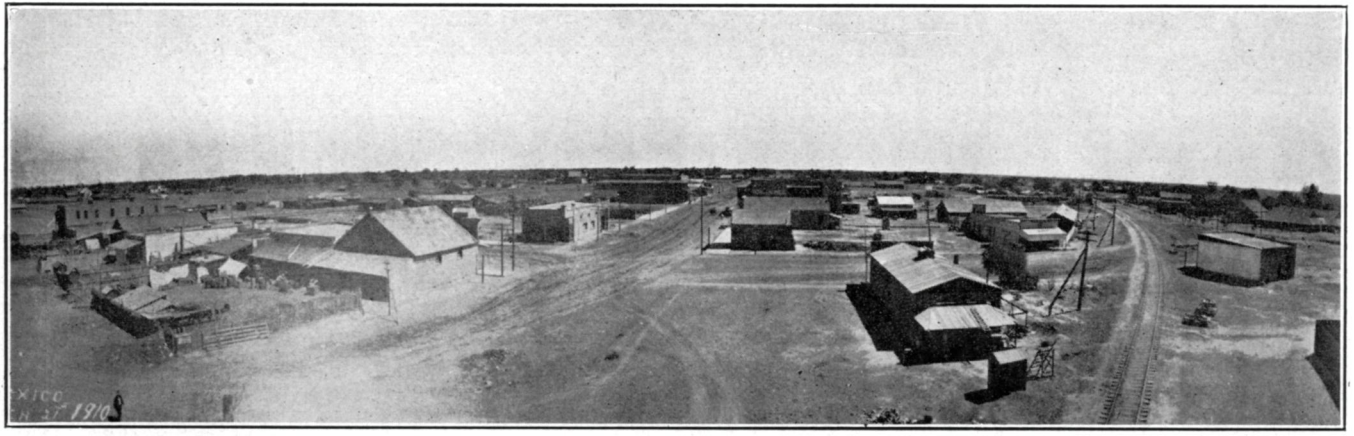
The county was diveded into Supervisoral districts. The same divisions were made for this as for the Irrigation districts. In other words, the Supervisoral districts and the Irrigation districts were identical in area. Calexico is in District No. 1. Mr. S. McHarg was the first Supervisor of that district. Mr. George L. Pulliam is the present Supervisor (1922).

The Farmers' and Merchants' Club was organized soon after the great floods. It owes its beginnings directly to the great disaster, since it was the need that the merchants and farmers felt for each other that brought them together, and the club was the natural outgrowth. Mr. Edward Dool was its first president. The club worked consistently in cooperation with the town and with the Women's Club.

The Woman's Civic Improvement Club has been no small factor in the development of Calexico. It organized on the 3rd of June, 1908 with Mrs. John F. Steindorf as its first president. There were 24 charter members. Mrs. J. E. Peck was perhaps the most active worker in the framing of the constitution. Mrs. Fritz Kloke is also deserving of special mention. She had definite plans and worked them out with untiring zeal. She passed away in Los Angeles in 1915.

The first activity of the club was a series of social events for the purpose of raising money to plant trees in the town. Heber Park had just been laid out. It is situated on Emerson street, one block from Imperial Avenue in the northern part of the town. The Woman's Club undertook the expense of planting this park with trees. Also the women planned to place trees on the school grounds and in the parkings. After much labor and expense, the trees were planted in the park only to be promptly frostbitten and to die, and all the work had to be done over again.

The Club's next valuable achievement was the establishment of a reading room for men in the town. The value of this reading room can scarcely be appreciated without a brief resumé of the conditions pertaining in the town. Calexico was "dry." Mexicali was exceedingly "wet." There were a great many working-men in Calexico without their families. They had no homes and no place to go, hence many wandered "across the line" and promptly became incapacitated for work the next day. This reading room contained the daily papers, the leading magazines, and all the books that the inhabitants could donate. Hence it materially improved the condition in the town.



Calexico in 1910.

The next step was to add a rest room for women. It was provided with couches, tables and chairs. It was especially for the women from the ranches who had to travel many miles to town and always stayed all day. Here a club woman was in charge, and the women from the ranches could leave their babies while they were shopping, or they could find rest themselves.

The following year, Mrs. Thomas Mahew became president of the Club. That year, the Club enlarged its reading room into a small circulating library. This reading and rest room was situated in the adobe building which still stands between First and Second streets on Imperial Avenue.

Mrs. Steindorf was president again the third year and the library continued to grow. At first, the club women alternately took care of the books, but it soon ougtrew this method. Miss Dorothy Gleason was made the first regular librarian, serving three hours a day, three days a week. In September, 1910 Mrs. Bessie Wofford took charge. In April, 1912 the Imperial County Library was organized and the Calexico library merged with it.

On the very eve of the floods, Mr. Frank Thing expressed his confidence in the town by putting up the first two-story building. It was known as the Thing Building, and it still stands on the corner of Second and Paulin Streets. It housed the Thing Brothers' meat market.

About this time the people of Calexico felt the need of a town government. They had outgrown the method (or lack of method) formerly employed,—namely, running things by common consent. Accordingly, the people elected a Board of Trustees.

This newly elected board held its first regular meeting in the office of the Calexico *Chronicle* on Imperial Avenue on the evening of April 28, 1908. The trustees were: Messrs. J. A. Morrison, G. W. Shenk, Dr. W. T. Heffernan, G. W. McCullum and F. F. Thing. Mr. O. B. Tout acted in the capacity of clerk. Mr. Morrison was elected president of the board. Mr. J. M. Eshleman was, by a unanimous vote, selected City Attorney.

The board then set to work drawing up ordinances, the very first of which was to prohibit the sale of liquor in Calexico. The second regulated the placing of guy wires for the public safety. The third fixed the time and place of meeting of the board. The fourth provided for police supervision. A total of seven ordinances was framed that night. The seventh prohibited gambling. All of them were passed. The *Chronicle* office was to be the regular place of meet-

ing. Later that spring Dr. Harvey Smith was appointed Health Officer.

That summer, sidewalks were completed in the business section. In October the "Eastside Addition" was annexed to the town.

On January 22, 1909, a special election was held at which bonds were carried to the extent of $3,500 for municipal buildings and other improvements. The following month, the city made arrangements with the Holton Power Company for street lights.

In the spring of 1909, the City Hall was moved into a room of its own in the rear of the Thing Building. The town then purchased its first typewriter for the use of the clerk.

On October 2, 1909, another special election was held to vote more bonds: $28,000 was voted for water works and a water system; $2,000 to buy land for reservoirs for the city water. Owing to the large amount of silt in the water, already referred to, settling basins were imperative. The sum of $2,000 was voted for fire fighting apparatus; $500 being intended for the improvement of the parks and $3,500 for a City Hall and jail. The following spring, the Fire Engine House was built on First Street.

At this time also, the crossing into Mexico was moved from Heber Avenue to Heffernan, where it remains today.

Rockwood Plaza had been set aside for park purposes and was being used as a base-ball ground. It was surrounded by a high board fence. It was quite a contrast to the beautiful park that is found there now. About this time, also, the Post Office was dignified with a location of its own at Third Street and Imperial Avenue.

Varney Brothers had established a general merchandise store in Imperial in 1902. It had grown and prospered. In 1910, that firm established a branch store in Calexico. There, also, their business flourished. Now they are one of the leading firms in the Valley, having six stores in as many different towns.

During this time, the *Chronicle* had seen several changes. Its successive editors were: Messrs. Charles A. Gardner, John Baker, now of Holtville, O. B. Tout, and Bert Perrin. Mr. Perrin was editor from 1913 to 1922.

In the fall of 1907, the ninth grade was added to the school. It met in the old Congregational Church at 6th and Paulin streets. This old church building has since been bought by the members of the colored Baptist Church, who moved it to Third Street and Eastside Avenue.

The town was growing so rapidly that the following year a new school building was imperative. A splendid new two-story brick school was built. This school building was the pride of the town. Two years later, in 1910, the kindergarten was started in the original little school building on Sixth Street, where it still meets. In the spring of 1911, the high school graduated its first class.

In 1915, construction was begun on a large and splendid new high school building. That same year, the Dool School was built to provide for the children in the east part of the town. It was a beautiful school building in Spanish style and surrounded by several acres of play-ground. The Rockwood School was also completed about this time. It is similar to the Dool School in architecture.

In order to encourage the planting of trees, the city undertook to water and care for parkings free for all property owners who would plant trees. This plan furnished a great impetus for tree planting. At the present time every street is lined with trees. The graceful pepper tree predominates.

The sewer system was installed in 1911.

At this time, also, Calexico had a miniature prohibition fight. "Temperance beer" was the issue. It contained 2% of alcohol and was claimed by many not to conflict with Calexico's first ordinance. Its advocates declared it was not an intoxicating liquor. The fight was exciting. Every citizen was lined up on one side or the other of the issue. The matter was brought before the board of Supervisors and that body decided against the "temperance beer." This decision was made on the 22nd of April, 1911.

Early the next year, a small frame jail was put up in the southwest corner of Rockwood Park. This proved too fragile for a jail, so two years later it was moved to its present location in the fire engine house on First Street.

It was in 1909 that cotton was first grown in marketable quantities around Calexico. Four hundred bales were sold that year. With this success, several cotton gins were built and the production of cotton steadily increased.

Calexico was never long without excitement. Huey Stanley was a radical I. W. W. leader. He was a man of courage, strength, and considerable military ability. It is a pity that a man of his talents and initiative should lead others in a wrong direction, as this man did. Berthold and Ryan Price were Stanley's co-workers. They led a band of I. W. W.'s, largely composed of bums, across the border into Mexico. They attempted to set up a socialist com-

munity according to their own ideas, directly across New River from Calexico.

Governor Kelso Vega of Lower California would not permit the settlement. Stanley and his men would not leave; so the regular Mexican army attempted to drive them out. The result was a battle between the two forces in February, 1911. All Calexico watched the struggle, which began shorly before noon and lasted until dark. The churches cared for the wounded and buried the dead. Dr. Dana Weed was chief hero of the rescue work. At that time, he was not yet a physician, but his big heart was always interested in suffering humanity. School children brought cloth from their homes for bandages to help him in the work.

The result of the day's fighting was that the Mexican army retreated to the kindly shelter of Mt. Signal, some fourteen miles away. Stanley and his men were victorious for the time.

However, on the 8th of April in the same year, the Mexican army returned 900 strong with General Mayol at its head. This time the fighting took place a mile or so further to the south. Stanley and his men fought bravely and killed 13 and wounded 28 of Mayol's men. Mayol's soldiers shot and killed Stanley himself. Without its leader, Stanley's army fell into disorder and soon dispersed. Thus ended the socialist settlement across New River.

Four years later, Calexico suffered a real tragedy. About eight o'clock in the evening of June 22, 1915, the vicinity was visited by an unusually severe earthquake shock. Forty minutes later, another shock came equally as bad as the first one had been. Several fires resulted. A camp of American soldiers was stationed there at the time, and the soldiers helped the fire department in extinguishing the conflagrations. Most of the fires were in residences though perhaps the largest one was the Thing Building. The building was saved, however, without irreparable damage having been done.

Everything of brick was leveled to the ground. Not a brick building was spared, not even a brick chimney remained standing. The beautiful new Rockwood School building, the pride of the town, was nothing but a pile of bricks. The new high school building was about half completed. It was so badly shaken that it had to be reconstructed.

There were no deaths from the quake in Calexico, but Mexicali was not so fortunate. It suffered many. The total damage in Calexico amounted to about $300,000.

List of Presidents of Board of Trustees or Mayors:

J. A. Morrison	John C. Pace
E. H. Rockwood	Edward Dool
C. H. Holmes	Casey Abbott
E. H. Rockwood	T. J. West
Ale Baskin	

List of City Clerks:

O. B. Tout	Edward B. Brown
J. B. Hoffman	Frank P. Green
Robert L. Glasby	Paul Steindorf

City Manager:
Paul Steindorf

Chapter VI.

Calexico Today—1915-1923

Let us now view Calexico as it is today.

The High School was rebuilt and completed in 1915. It is a beautiful building and a credit to the town. The year 1918 saw the completion of the Hoffman School, a new grammar school on Seventh Street. The original school building is still in use as a kindergarten. Besides this, there are now three grammar schools and the high school.

The Library remained in the old adobe on Imperial Avenue until the year 1919. Andrew Carnegie's assistance was then accepted and a splendid new library building was constructed on Heber Avenue at Fifth Street. The Library moved into its new home in February of the year 1919. Mrs. Bessie Wofford is still librarian. She is doing a great work for her city in her untiring helpfulness to everyone who seeks assistance in the Library.

The Calexico Chamber of Commerce organized on the evening of January 30, 1917, as the successor to the Farmers' and Merchants' Club. A board of directors was elected and Mr. Frank D. Hevener was made the first president. In the early years of its existence, the Chamber was unable to accomplish much due to war conditions and the financial depression which followed.

In January, 1922, the Chamber reorganized with Mr. L. M. Hutchison as president. It secured a permanent location in the Calexico Hotel Building. It has a public welfare room, a dining room, and a kitchen. Great interest has been shown and the membership has jumped to 400. Much is being done to advertise Calexico throughout the United States.

In November, 1922, the first annual International Cotton Pageant was held with a view to advertising Calexico as a cotton center. It was a complete success.

The Chamber is now agitating the erection of a Federal Building and a first-class hotel. It has hopes of obtaining both in the near future.

Calexico now has three railroads. The Southern Pacific has already been mentioned. The Inter-California, it will be remembered, was begun in 1905, destroyed by the flood the following year, and was rebuilt and completed in 1908. It is a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Company, but is operated entirely separately on a concession of the Mexican government. It begins at Calexico, crosses the border there and runs through Mexican territory to Yuma. The railroad was the idea of the late E. H. Harriman. The purpose was to provide a direct outlet for produce from the Southern end of the Valley. More than this, it serves the purpose of a "double track" between Niland and Yuma. Trains going one direction can be routed one way, and trains going the opposite direction can be routed the other way. This results in a material saving of time, for both passenger and freight service.

Mr. William F. Herrin is president of the Inter-California Railroad and Mr. Paul Shoup is vice-president. Both are also officials of the Southern Pacific. Mr. E. G. Burdick is general manager of the railroad with headquarters at Calexico.

Two of the trans-continental passenger trains of the Southern Pacific are now routed through Calexico over the Inter-California tracks.

The San Diego and Arizona Railroad of which Mr. John D. Spreckles of San Diego is president and principal owner, started construction east from San Diego in 1916. It was not completed, however, until 1920. The cost was $18,000-000. The road cuts directly through the mountains, and has 17 tunnels and countless bridges in its course. From El Centro to Calexico, it operates over the Southern Pacific tracks and from there to Yuma over the Inter-California tracks.

The year 1922 saw the transfer of the Calexico *Chronicle* from Mr. Bert Perrin, in whose hands it had been for nine years, to Messrs. Randall Henderson and Myron Watson.

At present, all the water used in the Valley comes through one heading. This is situated about one and a quarter miles north of the international boundary and is officially called Rockwood Gate, but commonly known as

Hanlon Heading, after the man on whose property it was built. The water then flows through Mexican territory *via* the Alamo canal. A few miles east of Calexico, it again enters our country and branches into several main canals. These branch off again and again, so that every foot of the Irrigation District's soil is watered by gravity.

The East Side main canal and the West Side main canal are also known as the "high line" canals. They follow the highest line along which the water will flow naturally. Outside of these two canals, the land cannot be irrigated by gravity. It is, therefore, still the natural desert.

The United States Government has never granted the Valley permission to use the waters of the Colorado since its refusal to do so in 1904. Water is being used, however, by virtue of an old filing made by Mr. C. N. Perry in 1895 under the laws of California.

The California Development Company went into the hands of a receiver in 1909 and was operated by him until 1916. In April of that year, it was sold at sheriff's sale. By arrangement, the property was bought by the Southern Pacific Company and then sold again to the Imperial Irrigation District. Thus the old California Development Company went out of existence.

The water companies were from their beginnings independent of the California Development Company. They were mutual companies. At the present time, they are in the process of merging with the Irrigation District.

The old Imperial Land Company went out of existence soon after the first rush of settlers was over.

After all the noble work, sacrifice, and fortunes that have been poured into the reclamation of this Colorado Desert, it is a grave reflection on the business methods in operation in our country that hundreds of acres of this reclaimed land are now idle because the farmers can not profitably sell what they have raised. Acres and acres of food crops are plowed under every year because it does not pay the farmer to market his crop. The natural result is that much of the land has been abandoned for no other reason than the market conditions. After men and women have sacrificed so much to make this land produce food for humanity, it would seem that other men and women should make it their duty to regulate market conditions so that the original great and worthy motives may be fulfilled.

Mr. W. A. Brazie is the Inspector in charge of the United States Immigration Service. That Service at present employs nine men. Approximately 1,500 persons are ad-

mitted to the United States through the port of Calexico each year. About 300 depart. Calexico is a port of entry for exempt Chinese.

Under ordinary circumstances, there are no passport regulations, and people from the two towns pass freely over the border. During the war, however, very strict passport regulations were in force. Complete identification, including photograph and signature, was necessary. During that time, the office employed 29 men.

Armed guards from the Immigration Service are always stationed at the border to see that no one crosses who has no right to do so. They are continually on the watch for escaping criminals.

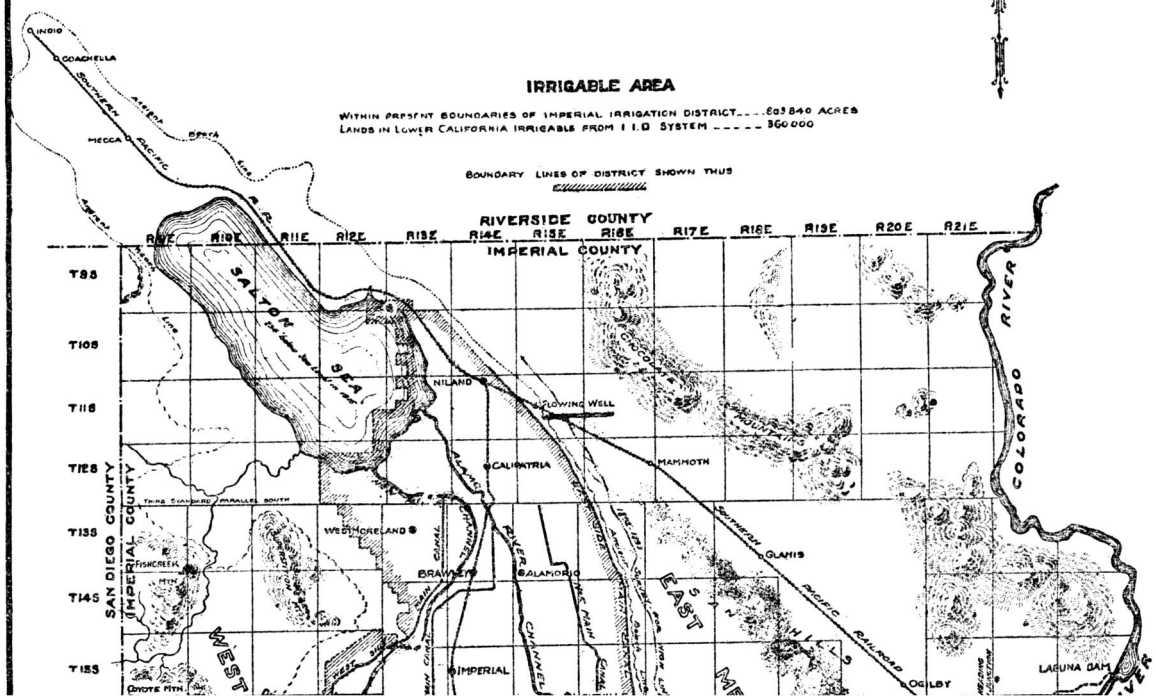
The Customs Service at the port of Calexico, is headed by Mr. C. R. Brown, who has himself contributed a brief but comprehensive survey of his department. It follows, in part:

> On July 1st, 1910, Heffernan Avenue having been made the official crossing, the Custom House was moved to a brick building on the northwest corner of Heffernan Avenue and First Street and, on July 5, 1915, was moved south to the present location in the substantial brick building on Heffernan Avenue near the Mexican boundary.
>
> The value of imports at the port for the year 1903 was $13,776; the value for the banner year of 1919 was $12,471,551; the value for 1921 was $6,753,380. In 1902, the principal imports were cattle; during the past few years, imports have varied but consist principally of cotton. The falling off in value for the year 1921 is not so much on account of any lessened volume of business as because of the drop in prices, especially on cotton.
>
> The Port of Calexico was established, and is now, under the district of San Diego. The port was placed under the district of Los Angeles in 1913 but in 1920 was put back into the district of San Diego. Honorable C. D. Sprigg, the present collector of customs at San Diego and in charge of this district, was chief clerk or special deputy collector in the San Diego office at the time the Calexico office was opened in 1902.
>
> The first customs officer stationed at the Port of Calexico was Customs Inspector Charles Sandborn. The first deputy collector in charge was Deputy Collector Ralph Conklin, who took charge on May 1st, 1905. The present officer in charge is Deputy Collector E. R. Brown, who has been stationed here since 1915 and has been in charge since 1917.

On the 4th of March, 1922, flags throughout the Valley were lowered to half mast as an expression of grief at the passing of Mr. C. R. Rockwood. He had moved to Los Angeles some time previously but had not severed his business connections in the Valley. His last visit in Calexico occurred only a month before his death. About a year before his passing, he had a severe attack of pneumonia, from

MAP
OF THE
IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT
AND
LANDS IRRIGABLE BY GRAVITY FROM
THE
IMPERIAL CANAL SYSTEM

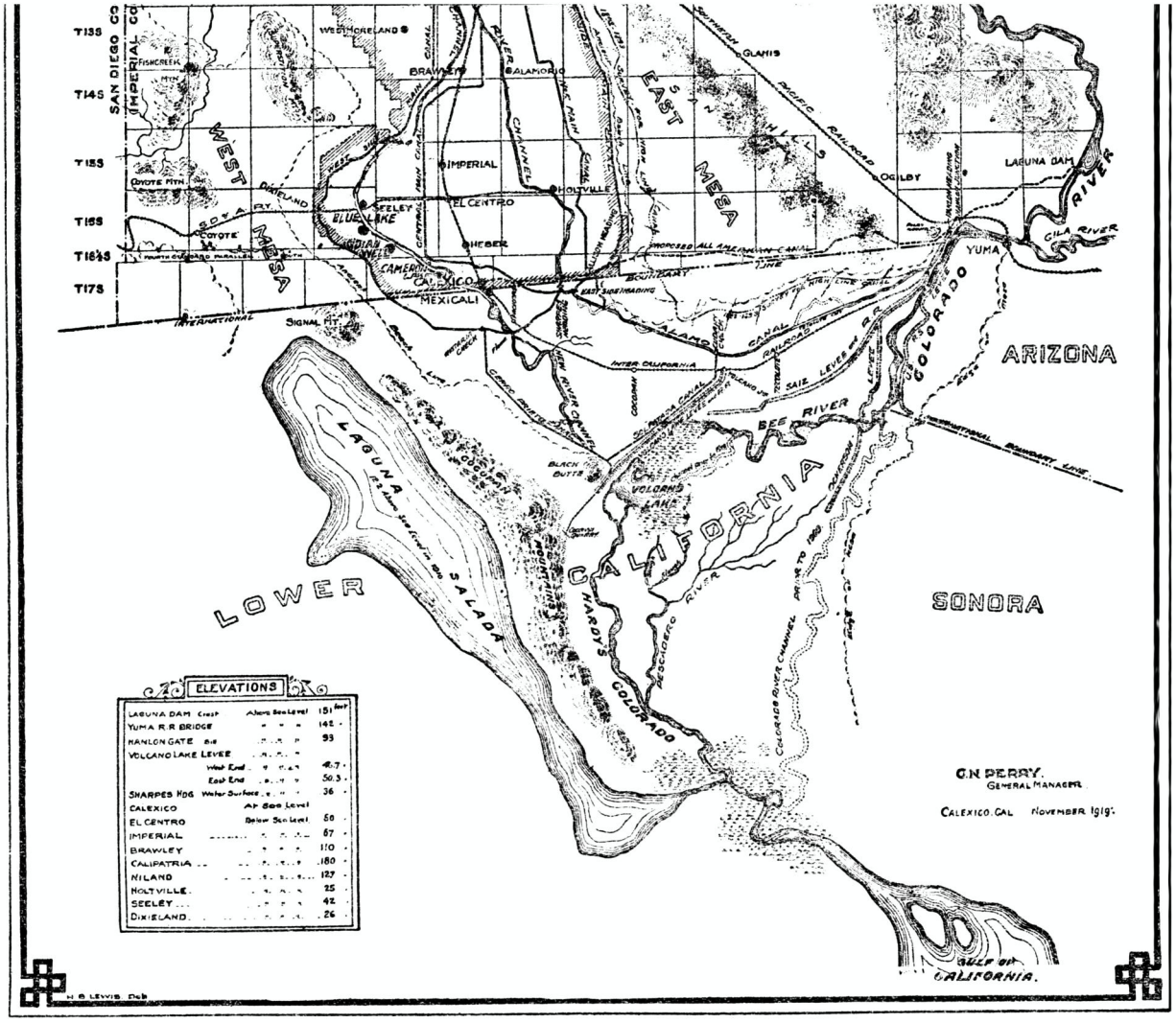
SCALE IN MILES.



IRRIGABLE AREA

WITHIN PRESENT BOUNDARIES OF IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT.....603 840 ACRES
LANDS IN LOWER CALIFORNIA IRRIGABLE FROM I.I.D. SYSTEM 360 000

BOUNDARY LINES OF DISTRICT SHOWN THUS



ELEVATIONS

LAGUNA DAM Crest	Above Sea Level	151 feet
YUMA R.R BRIDGE	" " "	142 "
HANLON GATE Sill	" " "	93 "
VOLCANO LAKE LEVEE		
West End	" " "	48.7 "
East End	" " "	50.3 "
SHARPES HOG Water Surface	" " "	36 "
CALEXICO	At Sea Level	
EL CENTRO	Below Sea Level	50 "
IMPERIAL	" " "	67 "
BRAWLEY	" " "	110 "
CALIPATRIA	" " "	180 "
NILAND	" " "	127 "
HOLTVILLE	" " "	25 "
SEELEY	" " "	42 "
DIXIELAND	" " "	26 "

which he never fully recovered. However, the immediate cause of his death was heart failure. His wife, a sister and two brothers survive him and the whole Valley mourns his loss.

Calexico has achieved much in recent years. Besides the two original parks, it has acquired 17 acres, which it is holding for park purposes in the future. It now has $500,000 worth of paving and 28 miles of sidewalks valued at $545,000. It has six miles of sewers. It has planted over 5,000 trees in its parkings.

It has recently added a new pumping plant to its water works, tripling its capacity. It has increased its settling basin capacity six-fold and added a chlorine plant and a filter system for purifying the drinking water.

It has installed a modern fire alarm system. Calexico is proud of its total assessed valuation of well over $6,000,000.

Building has progressed rapidly. Imperial Avenue, where only a few years ago the cowboys raced their ponies, is now a paved highway, the main road out of Calexico to El Centro and all points north. Stores line both sides of the street from Second to Seventh Street.

Second Street is the principal business street. It is lined with two-story business blocks from Imperial Avenue to one-half block east of Heffernan Avenue.

Heffernan Avenue is the only street that crosses the border. It is on this street that the Immigration and Customs offices are located. Between Second Street and the border, Heffernan is lined with foreign stores. First Street, parallel to the border, is also foreign. The very air has a foreign scent. Here are Oriental stores, with Oriental signs on their windows, where dried fish in great variety hang, where also many wares, unfamiliar to the American trader, are exhibited for sale.

Then there are the Mexican stores with their gaudy, over-crowded window displays and their narrow aisleways. The Mexican restaurant is also present with its tortillas and its strong odor of chili. Neither must we overlook the fish market with its varied odors. It is almost like being in a foreign country to walk in this section of the town, except that one feels the protection offered by the flag that floats above the Custom House. The Mexican flag floats from its Custom House only a few feet from ours.

All of the close-in section of Calexico is paved and the city is rapidly extending its sidewalks to the outlying sections.

The city Hall has recently moved into its new building on Heber Avenue at Fourth Street. The Library and City Hall occupy two separate buildings set on an entire square block of lawn. Rockwood Park occupies the next two consecutive blocks on Heber Avenue and the high school adjoins the park on the north. The large expanse of park with lawn and trees thus formed serves as a community center and meeting place for the people in civic and general social affairs.

Again, the citizens of Calexico began to feel that they had outgrown their system of government. Accordingly, they investigated other methods, and finally, on February 19, 1918, they adopted the Commission Plan. The people elected five commissioners to be the heads of the five departments. These departments were: Street Department; Public Health; Safety and Welfare; Light and Water; Fire, Police and Law; and Finance and Accounting. The five commissioners elected the Mayor, City Clerk, and other important officials and had general control and supervision over city affairs.

On the First of November, 1922, the City again changed its form of government. This time the City Manager Plan was adopted. Honorable Paul Steindorf, former City Clerk, is the first and present City Manager. He appoints all city officers except the Mayor. The commissioners are retained as heads of their respective departments. The chairman of the Board of Commissioners acts in the formal capacity of Mayor. The actual business, however, is in the hands of the Manager.

In the brief space of twenty-two years, Calexico has grown from a mere grading camp on the desert to a thriving city of some 7,000 souls.

It would seem that Fate had been against it from the beginning. Yet in spite of almost every conceivable difficulty, the people have at last succeeded. The "Spirit of the Valley" has prevailed.